(c) Some of the steps taken to enhance agri-exports include sending delegations abroad, participating in International trade fairs, inviting potential buyers and providing financial assistance to exporters for improving quality, packaging, brand promotion of products and conducting market surveys. Recently, the excise duty on Food Grade Hexane, which is a solvent used for extraction of oil, has been reduced from 32% to 16%.

Setting up of nine industrial estates

1744. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to set up nine industrial estates, with an investment of Rs.1500 Crores, in the Eastern States of the country, to promote industrial activity in the region; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, including State-wise locations identified for setting up the industrial estates and the pattern of funding evolved therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion had proposed a Scheme for Integrated Infrastructure Development of the Eastern and North Eastern Region. The Scheme would be applicable in the 8 States of North Eastern Region *viz.* Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim and the Eastern States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Under the Scheme, there would be two (2) industrial locations each in the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal,Orissa and Assam. For the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim there would be one (1) industrial location each. Government would provide a 'one-time' assistance of Rs. 100 crore to each such industrial location for integrated infrastructure development. Planning Commission has accorded "in-principle" approval in order to enable preparation of a Detailed Feasibility Report (DFR) on the said Scheme.

Assistance to coir producing States

1745. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central assistance is granted to coir producing States for infrastructure upgradation;

(b) if so, the details in this regard, with assistance released under the scheme to various States during the last five years, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government of Karnataka has sought financial assistance for development of Channapatna Coir Cluster covering Bangalore, Mandya, Mysore and Chamarajanagar districts; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard and the Centre's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Under Industrial Infrastructure Upgradation Scheme(IIUS), a project for upgradation of infrastructure facilities in Coir Cluster, Alappuzha, Kerala has been approved and an amount of Rs. 14.20 crore has been sanctioned in the year 2004-05.

(c) and (d) The proposal submitted by Government 6f Karnataka for development of Channapatna Coir Cluster was found ineligible for sanction under the IIUS and Government of Karnataka have accordingly been informed.

Dispute regarding DEPB Scheme with Income Tax Department

1746. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) for how many years has DEPB scheme been in operation;

(b) what was the intention of introducing this DEPB scheme;

(c) whether it is a fact that some disputes have recently arisen on this scheme with the income tax department;

(d) what steps Government are taking to ensure that exporters are not denied their rightful dues under the DEPB scheme; and

(e) what exactly is being done to clarify doubts and problems with regard to the views of the income tax department on the DEPB scheme?